

OXFORD
LINGUISTICS

semantic categories

levels of analysis

reference

clause structure purpose of language

categorization

A Functional Discourse Grammar for English

Evelien Keizer

constituent order

illocution

functionalism

operators

intonation

OXFORD TEXTBOOKS IN LINGUISTICS

OXFORD TEXTBOOKS IN LINGUISTICS

A Functional Discourse Grammar for English

OXFORD TEXTBOOKS IN LINGUISTICS

PUBLISHED

- | | |
|--|--|
| A Functional Discourse Grammar
for English
<i>by</i> Evelien Keizer | Principles and Parameters
An Introduction to Syntactic Theory
<i>by</i> Peter W. Culicover |
| Pragmatics
Second edition
<i>by</i> Yan Huang | A Semantic Approach to English Grammar
<i>by</i> R. M. W. Dixon |
| Compositional Semantics
An Introduction to the Syntax/Semantics
Interface
<i>by</i> Pauline Jacobson | Semantic Analysis
A Practical Introduction
<i>by</i> Cliff Goddard |
| The Grammar of Words
An Introduction to Linguistic Morphology
Third edition
<i>by</i> Geert Booij | The History of Languages
An Introduction
<i>by</i> Tore Janson |
| A Practical Introduction to Phonetics
Second edition
<i>by</i> J. C. Catford | Diachronic Syntax
<i>by</i> Ian Roberts |
| Meaning in Language
An Introduction to Semantics
and Pragmatics
Third edition
<i>by</i> Alan Cruse | Cognitive Grammar
An Introduction
<i>by</i> John R. Taylor |
| Natural Language Syntax
<i>by</i> Peter W. Culicover | Linguistic Categorization
Third edition
<i>by</i> John R. Taylor |

IN PREPARATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| Lexical Functional Grammar
<i>by</i> Mary Dalrymple, John Lowe,
and Louise Mycock | Speech Acts and Sentence Types in English
<i>by</i> Peter Siemund |
| The Lexicon
An Introduction
<i>by</i> Elisabetta Ježek | Linguistic Typology
Theory, Method, Data
<i>by</i> Jae Jung Song |
| Translation
Theory and Practice
<i>by</i> Kirsten Malmkjaer | |

A Functional Discourse Grammar for English

Evelien Keizer

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Evelien Keizer 2015

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First Edition published in 2015

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014940244

ISBN 978-0-19-957186-4 (Hbk)

ISBN 978-0-19-957187-1 (Pbk)

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

Contents

Acknowledgements x

List of tables xi

List of abbreviations and symbols xii

1. Why Functional Discourse Grammar? 1

1.1. Introduction 1

1.2. Why linguistic theory? 2

1.3. Why functional? 5

1.3.1. Some fundamental theoretical issues 5

1.3.2. Formal and functional approaches 10

1.4. Why discourse? 13

1.5. What is (in) a grammar? 14

1.6. Summary 15

Exercises 16

Suggestions for further reading 19

2. The general architecture of FDG 20

2.1. Introduction 21

2.2. FDG in its wider context 23

2.2.1. The Conceptual Component 23

2.2.2. The Contextual Component 25

2.2.3. The Output Component 28

2.3. The Grammatical Component 28

2.3.1. Operations 28

2.3.2. Primitives 30

2.3.3. Levels of representation 31

2.4. Summary 39

Exercises 40

Suggestions for further reading 42

3. The Interpersonal Level 43

3.1. Introduction 44

3.2. The organization of the Interpersonal Level 45

3.3. The Move	48
3.3.1. General characterization	48
3.3.2. The head	49
3.3.3. Modifiers	50
3.3.4. Operators	51
3.4. The Discourse Act	52
3.4.1. General characterization	52
3.4.2. The head	57
3.4.3. Modifiers	58
3.4.4. Operators	59
3.5. The Illocution	60
3.5.1. General characterization	60
3.5.2. The head	61
3.5.3. Modifiers	66
3.5.4. Operators	68
3.6. The Speech Participants	68
3.6.1. General characterization	68
3.6.2. The head	70
3.6.3. Modifiers	71
3.6.4. Operators	71
3.7. Communicated Content	72
3.7.1. General characterization	72
3.7.2. The head	73
3.7.3. Modifiers	79
3.7.4. Operators	82
3.8. Ascriptive Subacts	83
3.8.1. General characterization	83
3.8.2. The head	85
3.8.3. Modifiers	87
3.8.4. Operators	89
3.9. Referential Subacts	90
3.9.1. General characterization	90
3.9.2. The head	92
3.9.3. Modifiers	94
3.9.4. Operators	95
3.10. Summary	96
Exercises	97
Suggestions for further reading	101

4. The Representational Level	102
4.1. Introduction	103
4.2. The organization of the Representational Level	104
4.3. The Propositional Content	108
4.3.1. General characterization	108
4.3.2. The head	109
4.3.3. Modifiers	113
4.3.4. Operators	116
4.4. The Episode	117
4.4.1. General characterization	117
4.4.2. The head	119
4.4.3. Modifiers	121
4.4.4. Operators	123
4.5. The State-of-Affairs	124
4.5.1. General characterization	124
4.5.2. The head	125
4.5.3. Configurational heads: number and roles of the participants	127
4.5.4. Copular and existential constructions	136
4.5.5. Complex SoAs	140
4.5.6. Modifiers	142
4.5.7. Operators	143
4.6. The Property	146
4.6.1. General characterization	146
4.6.2. The head	148
4.6.3. Modifiers	150
4.6.4. Operators	151
4.7. The Individual	152
4.7.1. General characterization	152
4.7.2. The head	154
4.7.3. Modifiers	156
4.7.4. Operators	158
4.8. Locations and Times	159
4.8.1. General characterization	159
4.8.2. The head	162
4.8.3. Modifiers	164
4.8.4. Operators	166

4.9. Summary	166
Exercises	167
Suggestions for further reading	171
5. The Morphosyntactic Level	172
5.1. Introduction	173
5.2. The organization of the Morphosyntactic Level	175
5.3. Transparency and synthesis	178
5.4. Linguistic Expressions	181
5.5. Clauses	184
5.5.1. Introduction	184
5.5.2. The ordering of non-core units	186
5.5.3. Alignment	191
5.5.4. The ordering of core units	199
5.5.5. Dummy elements	204
5.5.6. Agreement	207
5.5.7. Subordination	208
5.6. Phrases	218
5.6.1. Introduction	218
5.6.2. The ordering of units within the Phrase	220
5.6.3. Dummy elements	225
5.6.4. Agreement	227
5.6.5. Subordination	229
5.7. Words	231
5.7.1. Introduction	231
5.7.2. Words vs. lexemes	232
5.7.3. Lexical and Grammatical Words	235
5.7.4. The ordering of non-core units	237
5.7.5. Alignment	240
5.7.6. The ordering of core units	242
5.7.7. Dummy elements	243
5.7.8. Compounding, derivation, and affixation: summary	244
5.8. Summary	246
Exercises	247
Suggestions for further reading	250

6. The Phonological Level	251
6.1. Introduction	252
6.2. The organization of the Phonological Level	255
6.3. Utterances	257
6.4. Intonational Phrases	259
6.5. Phonological Phrases	263
6.6. Phonological Words	269
6.7. Feet and Syllables	273
6.8. Summary	279
Exercises	280
Suggestions for further reading	282
7. Sample representations	283
7.1. Example 1	283
7.1.1. Interpersonal Level	284
7.1.2. Representational Level	285
7.1.3. Morphosyntactic Level	286
7.1.4. Phonological Level	288
7.2. Example 2	290
7.2.1. Interpersonal Level	290
7.2.2. Representational Level	290
7.2.3. Morphosyntactic Level	292
7.2.4. Phonological Level	293
7.3. Example 3	294
7.3.1. Interpersonal Level	294
7.3.2. Representational Level	295
7.3.3. Morphosyntactic Level	296
7.3.4. Phonological Level	297
Glossary	298
List of languages	317
Bibliography	319
Index	329

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to a number of colleagues, students, and friends who have contributed to this first textbook on Functional Discourse Grammar. My thanks go, first of all, to Kees Hengeveld and Lachlan Mackenzie, for encouraging me to write the book, for their support and advice throughout the writing process, and for their invaluable feedback on earlier versions. I am also grateful to the other members of the Functional Discourse Grammar research group, Marize Dall'Aglio Hattner, Mike Hannay, Wim Honselaar, Lois Kemp, Kasper Kok, Arjan Nijk, Hella Olbertz, and Ewa Zakrzewska, who discussed and commented on various chapters of the manuscript; a special word of thanks is owed to Hella Olbertz for initiating and organizing these meetings, and for providing me with the feedback. I would also like to thank María-Jesús Pérez Quintero, who at the early stages helped to give shape to the project. I'm indebted to my student assistants Udo Schimanofsky and Iris Vukovics for their perceptive comments and for the enthusiasm with which they suggested many useful ideas for exercises. Further I would like to thank the students of the FDG linguistics seminar at the University of Vienna (winter semester 2013) for their feedback and suggestions, and in particular Elnora ten Wolde for going through the whole manuscript once again. Thanks are also due to Victoria Hart and Kate Gilks at OUP for their patience and support, and to my copy-editor, Kim Allen. Finally, I'm grateful to Lotti Viola for preparing and proofreading the manuscript and to Maria Valencia Cuberos and Annemarie Rapberger for their help in correcting the proofs. It goes without saying that any remaining errors and shortcomings are entirely my own.

This book is dedicated, with heartfelt thanks and much love, to my partner Norval.

Evelien Keizer
Vienna

List of tables

- 4.1. Basic semantic categories 105
- 4.2. Further semantic categories 106
- 4.3. Different types of representational head
(layer of the Individual) 107
- 4.4. Different types of head: Propositional Contents 113
- 4.5. Different types of head: Episodes 121
- 4.6. Different types of head: States-of-Affairs 127
- 4.7. Predication frames in English 131
- 4.8. Possible combinations of basic semantic functions in English 135
- 4.9. Further types of SoA in English 138
- 4.10. Different semantic classes (parts-of-speech) 146
- 4.11. Different types of head: Properties 150
- 4.12. Different types of head: Individuals 156
- 4.13. Different types of head: Locations and Times 163
 - 5.1. Possible configurations of Linguistic Expressions 183
 - 5.2. Nominative–accusative alignment 195
 - 5.3. Absolute–ergative alignment 197
 - 5.4. Syntactic function assignment in three-place predication
frames, Type I 197
 - 5.5. Syntactic function assignment in three-place predication
frames, Types I and II 198
 - 5.6. Types of subordinate Clauses 208
 - 5.7. Matrix verbs and their complements 209
 - 5.8. Matrix verbs and their complements: representations 210
 - 5.9. Grammatical Affixes in English 238

List of abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations used in representations

Interpersonal level

1	singular
[±A]	± involving the Addressee
[±S]	± involving the Speaker
±id	± identifiable
±s	± specific
A	Addressee
A ₁	Discourse Act
approx	approximative
Aside	Aside
C ₁	Communicated Content
Con	Contrast
Conf	Confirmation
DECL	declarative
emph	emphasis
exact	exactness
F ₁	Illocution
Foc	Focus
h	higher social status
ILL	variable for an Illocution
IMP	imperative
INTER	interrogative
INTERP	interpellative
m	plural
M ₁	Move
Motiv	Motivation
P ₁	Speech Participant
R ₁	Subact of Reference
Reinf	Reinforcement

rep	reportative
S	Speaker
SA	Subact
T ₁	Subact of Ascription
Π	operator
Π ^A	operator of the Discourse Act (etc.)
Σ	modifier
Σ ^A	modifier of the Discourse Act (etc.)
Φ	pragmatic or rhetorical function
Φ ^A	function of the Discourse Act (etc.)

Representational level

◆	lexeme
∀	universal quantifier operator
∃	existential quantifier operator
∅	zero
1	singular / one
A	Actor
ant	anterior
Ass	Associative
coll	collective
Com	Comitative
comp	comparative
dis	distance
distr	distributive
e ₁	State-of-Affairs
ep ₁	Episode
f ₁	Property
hab	habitual
hyp	hypothetical
L	Locative
l ₁	location
LEX	lexeme
m	plural
p ₁	Propositional Content
past	past

perf	perfect
pop	pop marker
pres	present
prog	progressive
prox	proximity
Rec	Recipient
Ref	Reference
Res	Resultative
sgltv	singulative
sim	simultaneous
So	Source
t ₁	Time
U	Undergoer
x ₁	Individual
^c x ₁	countable Individual
^{coll} x ₁	collective Individual
^m x ₁	mass Individual
α ₁	variable at the relevant layer
π	operator
π ^e	operator of the State-of-Affairs (etc.)
σ	modifier
σ ^e	modifier of the State-of-Affairs (etc.)
φ	semantic function
φ ^e	semantic function of the State-of-Affairs (etc.)

Morphosyntactic level

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
Aaff ₁	Adjectival Affix
Adpp ₁	Adpositional Phrase
Adpw ₁	Adpositional Word
Ads ₁	Adpositional Stem
Advaff ₁	Adverbial Affix
Advp ₁	Adverbial Phrase

Adv _{s1}	Adverbial Stem
Adv _{w1}	Adverbial Word
Aff ₁	Affix
Ap ₁	Adjectival Phrase
As ₁	Adjectival Stem
Aw ₁	Adjectival Word
Cl ₁	Clause
^{dep} Cl ₁	Dependent Clause
def	definite
Gw ₁	Grammatical Word
indef	indefinite
Le ₁	Linguistic Expression
Naff ₁	Nominal Affix
Np ₁	Noun Phrase
Ns ₁	Nominal Stem
Nw ₁	Nominal Word
Obj	Object
past	past
past-part	past-participle
p ^{centre}	position of Clause with respect to pre- and postclausal positions
p ^F	final position
p ^{F-n}	position situated n places before the final position
p ^I	initial position
p ^{I+n}	position situated n places after the initial position
pl	plural
p ^M	medial position
p ^{M+n}	position situated n places after the medial position
p ^{M-n}	position situated n places before the medial position
p ^{post}	postclausal position
p ^{pre}	preclausal position
pres	present
sg	singular
Subj	Subject
sup	superlative
Vaff ₁	Verbal Affix
Vp ₁	Verb Phrase
Vs ₁	Verbal Stem
Vw ₁	Verbal Word

$\text{fin}V_{W_1}$	finite Verbal Word
$\text{nonf}V_{W_1}$	finite Verbal Word
Xp_1	Phrase of type X
Xs_1	Stem of type X
Xw_1	Word of type X

Phonological level

f	fall
F_1	Foot
h	high
IP_1	Intonational Phrase
l	low
PP_1	Phonological Phrase
PW_1	Phonological Word
r	rise
s	stress
s_1	Syllable
U_1	Utterance
π	operator

Parts-of-speech

A	Adjective
Ad	Adposition
Adv	Adverb
N	Noun
V	Verb

Abbreviations used in glosses

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative

ABS	absolute
ACC	accusative
ADMON	admonitive
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
COLL	collective
COMM	commissive
CONTR	contrastive
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DECL	declarative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DUB	dubitative
EMPH	emphasis
ERG	ergative
EXACT	exactly
F	feminine
FINAL	final (independent) verb
FOC	focus
FORMAL	formal
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IMM	immediate
IMP	imperative
INF	inferential
INTER	interrogative
M	male, masculine
NEG	negative, negation
PERC	perceived
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PROG	progressive
PROH	prohibitive
PRS	present tense
PST	past

REP	reportative
SEQ	sequence
SG	singular
SGLTV	singulative
Q	question marker
U	undergoer

1

Why Functional Discourse Grammar?

1.1. Introduction	1	1.5. What is (in) a grammar?	14
1.2. Why linguistic theory?	2	1.6. Summary	15
1.3. Why functional?	5	Exercises	16
1.4. Why discourse?	13	Suggestions for further reading	19

The aim of this chapter is to give a first impression of the assumptions and principles underlying the theory of Functional Discourse Grammar and to indicate its position in the larger context of linguistic research. After a brief introduction (Section 1.1), we will address the question of why many linguists wish to go beyond the level of language description and why, in doing so, they wish to make use of theoretical models (Section 1.2). Next, a very general characterization of Functional Discourse Grammar will be provided by discussing each of the words that make up its name:

- Why functional? (Section 1.3)
- Why discourse? (Section 1.4)
- What is (in) a grammar? (Section 1.5).

1.1. Introduction

Linguistics is all about trying to increase our knowledge of and insight into human language—how it is organized, used, and acquired and how it

develops over time. This is something linguists on the whole agree on. Linguists disagree, however, on what is the best way to achieve this. Some maintain that a systematic and detailed description and comparison of individual languages is, ultimately, all that is needed, while others believe that a certain degree of generalizing and theorizing is required, which often results in the use of linguistics models. Those who agree that theoretical models can be useful often disagree, however, on the shape and organization of such models, and the kind of phenomena they ought to represent and explain. Before embarking on a detailed description of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG), we will use this introductory chapter to address the question of why linguistic models in general, and FDG in particular, can help us understand how language works.

1.2. Why linguistic theory?

All linguistic research is first and foremost based on observation and description—it will be clear that it is no use trying to analyse linguistic expressions and to theorize about them unless we get the data right. This may sound simple, but performing the tasks of observation and description already involves a number of important decisions on the part of a linguist. First of all, a linguist has to decide what or who to observe, that is, which sources to use. In the first half of the twentieth century, linguists (or grammarians, as they are usually referred to) largely confined themselves to published texts (mostly of a literary or journalistic nature) and introspection. This choice was partly dictated by the circumstances in which these grammarians worked: published written sources were the only external sources that were readily available for examination. Partly, however, the restrictions were deliberately imposed by these grammarians themselves, since many of them believed that grammars ought to fulfil not only a **descriptive** but also a **prescriptive** function: their aim was not so much to describe which linguistic expressions were used in a language, but which linguistic expressions *ought* to be used. These expressions, they reasoned, were primarily to be found in published, edited texts. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, both the circumstances of linguistic research and the attitude of linguists towards the function of linguistic description changed. Technological developments made it possible to examine all kinds of language: written as well as spoken, formal and informal, different

geographical varieties (**dialects**) and social varieties (**sociolects**), while linguists, on the whole, opted for a more purely descriptivist approach, in which all these different sources were, indeed, considered relevant.

Another choice that descriptive grammarians were faced with was that of selecting the relevant information from the huge amount of raw data they had at their disposal: a principled choice needed to be made as to which data to describe and which not. For a long time these were the tasks linguists set themselves: in the so-called descriptive tradition linguists were, on the whole, content to give as comprehensive and systematic a description of one particular language as possible.

In the course of the twentieth century, however, linguists increasingly felt the need not only to describe what was and was not acceptable in a particular language, but also to reveal the rules and principles underlying the construction of linguistic expressions. This meant the description of languages was no longer seen as the ultimate aim of linguistic research, but as a basis for tackling such questions as why languages are organized the way they are, how they are acquired, and why and how they change. In other words, the linguist's aim was now to discover the system behind language and the general principles underlying this system. To perform this new task, linguists began to develop theoretical models which would allow them to compare (sometimes widely) different languages in a systematic manner, to make intra-linguistic and cross-linguistic generalizations, to recognize—perhaps not easily nor directly observable—deeper patterns, and to ensure consistency and efficiency in analysis. Rather than having to rely on ad hoc explanations, linguists were now able to develop a well-grounded, unified approach, using clearly defined concepts and unambiguous underlying representations.

Once the idea of using models to represent the internal organization of languages, as well as the relations between different languages, had gained a foothold, linguists became more ambitious. As the first models became more and more sophisticated, there was a growing awareness that these models could be used for other ends as well. Subsequently, these models came to be applied in a large number of areas, including:

- *Language processing*. This is where theoretical linguistics meets such disciplines as psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics. Some theories, for instance, claim to describe or represent the way human beings produce and process language, or the way (linguistic) knowledge is represented in the mind. These models go beyond the description and explanation of the

language system; they are meant to describe the actual processes of production and/or interpretation and are as such based on theories about how knowledge is stored, activated, and retrieved. Other theories take a more modest position in this respect, merely claiming to be compatible with what is at present known about language production and comprehension (see also Section 1.5).

- *Language acquisition.* Language models could also be applied in research on both first and second language acquisition. One of the fundamental questions in this area is that of how much (and which) linguistic knowledge is genetically determined (innate) and how much is acquired through exposure to linguistic input (see also Section 1.3).
- *Language change.* Just as theoretical models can help to describe, explain, and represent languages in their present form, they can do the same for the earlier stages of each language. This, in turn, can help us to chart the changes (in individual languages, but also in groups of languages) that have taken place over time; moreover, it enables linguists to demonstrate affinities that existed between now perhaps hugely differing languages at earlier stages of their development. Of particular interest in this respect is the process of **grammaticalization**. Most theories make a distinction between lexical elements (elements with semantic content, lexemes) and grammatical elements (semantically empty elements, e.g. inflections, auxiliaries, determiners, etc.). Since these two groups of elements behave differently (semantically, morphosyntactically, and phonologically), they are analysed and represented in different ways. Diachronic research has shown abundantly that most grammatical elements have developed out of lexical ones, and that, since this change is gradual, many elements are in the process of becoming grammatical at any point in the history of a language. It is this final point in particular that forms a challenge for linguistic models, which typically rely on a strict categorization of elements, and as such are ill-equipped to deal with this kind of in-between stage. At the same time, this particular feature of linguistic models may prove to be useful, as it forces the linguist to describe well-defined criteria for distinguishing lexical and grammatical elements (see also Section 1.3 and Section 2.3.2).
- *Language evolution.* In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the evolution of language, as linguists (as well as psychologists, cognitive scientists, biologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists, mathematicians, and many others) started to ask such questions as how did language emerge, did it emerge suddenly or gradually, how did it evolve, why is it structured the

way it is, what is its relation to biological evolution, and why is it that only humans possess it? Thus far, much of the work is speculative, but it is clear that here, too, theoretical considerations will play a role.

Altogether, there seem to be good reasons for wanting to couch one's linguistic research in some kind of theoretical framework. FDG is one such framework. This, of course, leads us to the question of which framework or model to use, and, more specifically, why use FDG?

1.3. Why functional?

1.3.1. Some fundamental theoretical issues

Although many linguists agree that some kind of theoretical basis is required in order to gain more insight into the way language is organized, there is at the same time considerable disagreement about what linguistic theories and the models they use should look like, which questions they should seek to answer, and on which underlying assumptions and beliefs they ought to be based. As a result, a great many theoretical models have been developed, each with their own specific object of study, their own aims and underlying principles, and their own concepts, terminology, and way of representing linguistic structure. Broadly speaking, it is possible to distinguish two main paradigms: the formal paradigm and the functional paradigm. Although the distinction is far from clear-cut, theories belonging to these paradigms tend to differ along a number of (sometimes interrelated) parameters. Let us consider some of these parameters in some detail.

1.3.1.1. The purpose of language

Whenever we use language, we do so for a reason, even if we are not always aware of the exact function of our linguistic utterances at a particular moment. Although in most cases the average speaker can identify some direct purpose (to give or obtain information, to get something done, or to express surprise or anger), speakers normally do not realize how many different functions language can serve. For a linguist, however, the question of why people use language is a crucial one, since, as we will see in what follows, the answer may determine which areas of linguistic description are considered to be central, which in turn will determine the exact object of study. The following list, although not exhaustive, gives an impression of

the wide range of functions that have been identified (based on Finch 2003: 21–40, cf. Jakobson 1960):

- (i) Physiological function
At moments of extreme excitement, anger, pain, etc., language may simply serve to release nervous/physical energy. Linguistic expressions fulfilling this function often take the form of ‘bad language’ (*Damn! Yuck!*)
- (ii) Phatic function
Language may serve a purely social function: we are not conveying information, but are merely being polite or sociable. Commenting on the weather may have this function, as well as other conventionalized phrases like *How do you do?* when used as a greeting or *Dear John* at the beginning of a letter.
- (iii) Recording function
People everywhere use language to note down things that they want to remember, from shopping lists, to minutes of a meeting, journals, and even epic stories.
- (iv) Identifying function
Language is constantly used to name things: by using a particular word to describe an object they want to talk about, people categorize that object as belonging to a particular class. One of the functions of such categorization is that it helps us to identify objects, thereby enabling hearers to pick out the object that I, as the speaker, have in mind (see also the discussion of linguistic categorization in subsection 1.3.1.5).
- (v) Reasoning function
Although not all of our thought processes make use of words, much of what we think already takes the shape of (more or less) complete linguistic constructions. As such, language can be seen as an instrument to express thoughts and ideas (sometimes also referred to as the symbolic function of language, e.g. Evans and Green 2006: 6–9).
- (vi) Communicating function
In the eyes of many people this probably constitutes the most crucial function of language, and perhaps even the *raison d’être* for the existence of language. People use language to communicate, to get their meaning across. Language, on this view, codes a speaker’s intentions; the hearer’s job is that of decoding the utterance and of deducing the intended message on the basis of the form of the linguistic expressions used by the speaker.

(vii) Pleasure function

In some cases, language is primarily used to give delight: in poetry, for instance, certain combinations of sounds (different forms of rhyme), and the use of special rhythms, neologisms, and unusual syntactic constructions may be used to give pleasure to the hearer or reader.

Not all of these functions are considered equally crucial. Generally speaking, linguistic theories tend to be based on one of only two of these functions: either it is believed that the main purpose of language is to express thought, or that language first and foremost serves the purpose of communication. Other functions are either subsumed under these two main functions (e.g. the identifying function can easily be seen as resulting from a need to communicate), or regarded as derivative, in the sense that the function may have arisen after language had come to exist (e.g. the phatic or the pleasure function).

1.3.1.2. The object of study

(i) *Central area of interest*

The grammar of a language is generally assumed to consist of a number of different areas, traditionally referred to as phonology (the study of sounds, stress, and intonation), morphology (the study of the internal structure of words), syntax (concerned with the structure of clauses and phrases, and the order of elements within clauses and phrases), semantics (the study of meaningful elements within a language), and pragmatics (concerned with the way in which speakers use language in order to communicate their intentions). In addition, grammars do not operate in isolation: there is continuous interaction between the grammar and a language user's conceptualization of the world, between the grammar and previous discourse, between the grammar and the immediate discourse situation (including the speech participants), and between the grammar and the society in which it is used. Different theoretical frameworks focus on different areas and relations, which inevitably leads to differences in the overall organization of the models used, as well as to differences in concepts, terminology, and representation.

(ii) *Competence vs. performance*

Many theoretical linguists (as well as prescriptivist grammarians through the ages) choose to concentrate on **competence** in their study of language,

that is, on a speaker's abstract, tacit knowledge about the structure of his/her (native) language. Within the heterogeneous phenomenon of human speech, De Saussure, for instance, made a distinction between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is defined as 'both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty'; it is 'a self-contained whole and a principle of classification' (De Saussure 1974 (1915): 9). *Parole*, on the other hand, is the executive side of human speech, the actual manifestations of language; as such, it is always individual (De Saussure 1974 (1915): 13). For De Saussure *langue* was the essential part of human speech: to master a language is to master its *langue*, that is, the system of signs that make up the language. Unlike *parole*, *langue* is homogeneous; as such it is the only part that can be studied separately. *Langue*, therefore, is the only possible object of study for the linguist.

Chomsky (1965, 1986) made a similar distinction. For him the two fundamentally different concepts are those of (grammatical) competence and **performance** (later I-language and E-language). Performance equals De Saussure's *parole*: it is defined as 'the actual use of language in concrete situations' (Chomsky 1965: 4) and is characterized by false starts, deviating forms, hesitation markers, and all kinds of other speech errors which speakers, on reflection, will identify as 'mistakes'. Performance, therefore, cannot be regarded as a direct reflection of a speaker's competence, that is, of 'the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language' (Chomsky 1965: 4). According to Chomsky, '[a] grammar of a language purports to be a description of the ideal speaker-hearer's intrinsic competence' (Chomsky 1965: 4). Linguistic theory is, in other words, mentalistic, 'since it is concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual behaviour' (Chomsky 1965: 4).

One might, on the other hand, also argue that performance forms the only objective and directly accessible source available; for empirical researchers (strongly represented in the discipline of corpus linguistics), it is therefore the only legitimate object of study. Moreover, it has turned out that from the point of view of language change, performance cannot be dismissed: what may be considered as ungrammatical or deviating use of language may, in fact, turn out to signal a change in progress.

1.3.1.3. Innateness

With regard to the issue of **innateness**, two different camps can be identified (although in-between positions also exist). On the one hand, there are the

nativists, who believe that children are born with a highly abstract knowledge of language (in the form of **language universals**). The most important reason for assuming the presence of such knowledge is the fact that children can learn their native language(s) very rapidly, at a very early age, and only before a certain age (the critical, or sensitive, period). Moreover, children manage to do this on the basis of incomplete and often incorrect input (often referred to as the ‘poverty of stimulus’ argument). This has led many linguists to believe that language must, to a large extent, be innate; that is, that knowledge about language, in a very abstract form, is there when we are born, as a kind of linguistic blueprint (the **language faculty** or **language acquisition device**). This abstract knowledge, in the form of language universals, needs to be activated by input, which then triggers the correct, language specific forms.

On the other hand, there is the cultural camp, or the emergentists, who claim that linguistic knowledge is acquired just like any other kind of knowledge. They do not believe in a separate language acquisition device, but maintain that children learn language through ‘emergence’ (Sampson 2005: 179–84) or ‘construction’ (Butler 2003: 26–7); that is to say, they gradually build up their knowledge of language on the basis of general cognitive abilities and linguistic input (see also Dik 1997a: 6–7).

1.3.1.4. The role of context

Some theories emphasize the importance of the context of a linguistic utterance, while in other theories the role of context is (at most) marginal. Whether or not context is considered to be important depends on what is regarded as the purpose of language and what forms the object of study. If the purpose of language is the expression of thought, we are dealing with a purely individual, mentalistic phenomenon, for which a study of context is irrelevant. Likewise, it will be clear that theories which focus entirely on grammatical competence will pay little or no attention to the context of use, whether linguistic or extra-linguistic: all that matters is that the expressions produced are grammatical according to a speaker’s internalized grammar. If, on the other hand, language is first and foremost seen as a means of communication, linguistic knowledge must include not only purely grammatical knowledge, but will also have to include knowledge of which expressions are most appropriate, effective, or efficient in a particular context. Similarly, if a theory is based on the idea that the form of linguistic utterances is (directly or indirectly) related to, or derived from, the way these expressions are used (i.e. their communicative function), the context in which these utterances are used cannot be ignored.

1.3.1.5. The nature of linguistic categorization

Man is often described as a categorizing animal in the sense that all human activity involves categorization: without the ability to recognize objects as belonging to a particular class, we could not survive (e.g. Labov 1973: 342; Lakoff 1987: 5–6). Similarly, both the use and the study of language cannot do without categorization. As Aarts et al. (2004) put it:

Categorization is a notion that lies at the heart of virtually all approaches to grammar, be they descriptive, theoretical, or cognitive. All linguists would agree that you cannot do linguistics without assuming that grammatical categories exist in some shape or other. What linguists disagree about is the nature of those categories. Are they discrete, as the classical Aristotelian tradition has it, or are they blurred at the edges, as has been argued more recently, especially by cognitive linguists?

(Aarts et al. 2004: 1)

Naturally, it would be most convenient for linguists if the classical view could be upheld and categories could be assumed to have strict boundaries, with each and every linguistic item clearly belonging to one, and only one class. As many linguists have pointed out, however, even the most basic distinctions in linguistics (say between verbs and nouns, or between lexical and grammatical elements) are not always clear cut (e.g. Crystal 1967; Taylor 2003; Aarts 2007; Keizer 2007a, 2007b). This means that we have to accept that linguistic categories may have fuzzy boundaries, while category membership may be graded, in that some elements may be better (more central) members of a category than others). To accommodate the idea of **gradience** in linguistic categorization, theories often appeal to **prototype theory** (e.g. Rosch 1978; Lakoff 1987).

1.3.2. *Formal and functional approaches*

Formal and functional approaches tend to take opposite stands on each of these issues. A very general characterization of the two perspectives will suffice to illustrate, in a somewhat black-and-white manner, the different choices they make. We will then proceed by giving a more detailed description of the FDG position.

The formal paradigm

Purpose of language Instrument for thought

Object of study Morphosyntax and phonology (i.e. the formal aspects of language); in particular the ideal native speaker's knowledge of those formal aspects (grammatical competence).

Innateness	Human beings have an innate knowledge of a ‘universal grammar’, i.e. the very abstract features that all languages have in common. This knowledge is located in a separate part of the brain (the language faculty), which functions autonomously from other types of knowledge.
Role of context	Very small. Typically limited to immediate linguistic context (the clause).
Categorization	Strict, on the basis of well-defined necessary and sufficient features.

The functional paradigm

Purpose of language	Instrument for communication
Object of study	All aspects of language that ultimately dictate the use and form of linguistic expressions, e.g. pragmatics, semantics, morphosyntax, and phonology, whereby pragmatics and semantics (intention and meaning) are more central than syntax and phonology (form). Focus of interest is the speaker’s communicative competence (Hymes 1972), i.e. all the knowledge required for successful linguistic communication.
Innateness	The acquisition of language develops as the result of communicative interaction; what is needed, apart from linguistic input, are the general cognitive abilities that also form the basis for the acquisition of many other forms of knowledge and skills.
Role of context	Essential. Since the form of linguistic expressions is regarded as being shaped by their use, they can only meaningfully be studied within the context in which they are used.
Categorization	Gradual, due to the interaction of several, sometimes competing, factors; definitions based on prototypical instances.

Functional Discourse Grammar, as the name clearly indicates, belongs to the functional paradigm. Within the functional paradigm, however, we find a wide range of different approaches, ranging from moderate to extreme (see discussion in Butler 2003: 28–31). Extreme functionalists, according to Butler (2003: 30) ‘not only claim that grammatical phenomena and categories emerge from the requirements of discourse, but also go on to reject the concept of grammar as a structural system’. Moderate functionalists, on the other hand, do recognize that, at any particular point in time, a grammar is indeed a structural system—a system shaped by use, and therefore to be described in relation to language use. FDG, Butler argues, belongs to the latter category; using Van Valin’s (1993) terminology, FDG can be characterized as a ‘structural-functional’ theory of language. A closer look at the FDG stand on some of the issues mentioned above seems to support this view:

- FDG ‘seeks to reconcile the patent fact that languages are structured complexes with the equally patent fact that they are adapted to function as instruments of communication between human beings’ (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008: ix; cf. Dik 1997a: 3).
- FDG believes in a functional explanation of the form of linguistic expressions. FDG takes, in other words, a ‘function-to-form’ approach: taking as its input a speaker’s communicative intentions, a process of formulation takes place which translates these intentions into two functional representations (one containing pragmatic, the other semantic information); in turn, these representations form the input to a process of encoding, which determines the morphosyntactic and phonological form of the utterance (e.g. Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008: 39).
- FDG tries to attain pragmatic adequacy. FDG takes a top-down, modular approach, starting with the speaker’s communicative intention. The basic unit of analysis is, therefore, not the clause or the sentence, but the Discourse Act, as expressing this communicative intention. In doing so, FDG ‘takes the functional approach to language to its logical extreme in that “pragmatics governs semantics, pragmatics and semantics govern morphosyntax, and pragmatics, semantics and morphosyntax govern phonology”’ (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008: 13; see also 37–8).
- FDG takes a discourse-oriented approach, acknowledging the fact that certain formal properties of a linguistic expression can only be explained when taking into account the discourse of which this expression forms part (see also Section 1.4). It is, however, not only the previous discourse

(textual information) which may determine the form of a linguistic utterance: in addition, the situational context (providing physical and social information about, for instance, the speech participants, the time and place in which the speech event takes place, any other entities), as well as long-term (cultural) knowledge need to be consulted at various times during the production of a linguistic expression (see e.g. Connolly 2004, 2007, 2014; Rijkhoff 2008; Cornish 2009; Alturo et al. 2014a).

- Finally, as far as the acceptance of gradience in linguistic categorization is concerned, the position taken by FDG clearly tends towards the structural (formal) position. Thus, although it is acknowledged that ‘[t]he analysis of linguistic data does not always lead to clear-cut results’, FDG does not regard this gradience to be part of the grammar: whereas the cognitive and acoustic information is analogue in nature, the grammar itself is digital (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008: 9). Where the distinction between lexical and grammatical elements is concerned, for instance, there is no denying that from a diachronic point of view, the distinction is a gradual one, with the large majority of grammatical elements being derived, through a gradual process, from lexical elements. Synchronically, however, FDG insists on a sharp distinction between the two categories—a distinction which, as we will see, plays a crucial role in the analysis of any linguistic utterance (see Section 2.3.2; see also Keizer 2007b, 2013).

From the preceding, it will have become clear that, although definitely belonging to the functional paradigm, FDG certainly does not take a radical position within this paradigm. In fact, it would be more correct to characterize FDG as occupying a position halfway between functional and formal approaches to grammar.

1.4. Why discourse?

One important feature of FDG is that it acknowledges the fact that some grammatical phenomena can only be explained by taking into consideration units higher than the individual clause or sentence. Consider the following simple exchange:

- (1) A: Where does your brother live?
B: He lives in London.

At least two formal features of B’s answer depend on the previous discourse context (in this case A’s question): the choice of pronoun (*he*) and the

prosodic prominence of *in London* as the most important part of B's answer). In FDG, these formal aspects are accounted for by allowing the grammar to interact with the (textual, situational, cultural, etc.) context in which the discourse takes place.

The view that linguistic utterances need to be considered in the larger discourse context also allows FDG to accept that units smaller than the clause can make up complete Discourse Acts. Examples of such units are vocatives (*Peter!*, *Doctor!*), answers to questions (A: *Where does he live?* B: *In London*), or conventionalized phrases (*Thanks*, *Good luck*). In FDG such units are not analysed as reduced clauses: as long as these units, by themselves, constitute complete contributions to the ongoing discourse, they will be analysed as (non-clausal) Discourse Acts. It is, in other words, the discourse-oriented nature of FDG that inevitably leads to the conclusion that the clause cannot be the basic unit of analysis (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008: 4).

Despite this attempt to integrate FDG into a larger discourse context, Hengeveld and Mackenzie emphasize that

FDG, despite its name, is not a functionally oriented Discourse Grammar (in the sense of an account of discourse relations). Rather, it is an account of the inner structure of Discourse Acts that is sensitive to the impact of their use in discourse upon their form. (2008: 42)

As we will see in the following section, this position is consistent with the FDG conception of what constitutes a grammar.

1.5. What is (in) a grammar?

We have seen that, as a functional theory, FDG does not analyse linguistic utterances in isolation, but also takes into account conceptual aspects (e.g. speakers' intentions) and contextual aspects (the discourse context and the immediate situation). In other words, FDG regards the grammar of a language as interacting with a conceptual and a contextual component in a wider theory of verbal communication. Nevertheless, it makes a clear distinction between the grammar and these other components, in that it only considers those linguistic phenomena that are encoded in the grammar of a language. Thus, unlike in cognitive linguistics, a sharp distinction is made between cognitive (conceptual) and semantic information: the former is preverbal in nature, and although it may trigger the use of specific linguistic forms, it is not in itself linguistic; semantic information, on the other hand, is part of the

grammatical system, and includes only those parts of a speaker's conceptualized knowledge of the world that are linguistically expressed. Thus, although FDG is functional in that it takes a 'function-form' approach, it is, as Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008: 38–9) point out, at the same time 'form-oriented': it only provides an account of those pragmatic and semantic, as well as conceptual and contextual phenomena which are reflected in the morphosyntactic and phonological form of an utterance. We will refer to this as the **Principle of Formal Encoding** (see also Section 2.2.2).

Another important issue concerns the relation between the FDG model and the actual, online process of language production. One of the distinctive features of FDG is that it is a top-down model, starting with the formulation of the speaker's intention and from there progressing to articulation. It needs to be emphasized, however, that this should not be interpreted as meaning that FDG is a model of the speaker, that is, a model faithfully reflecting the steps taken by the speaker in the production of a linguistic utterance. Although FDG seeks to be psychologically adequate in that it tries to make use of evidence from psycholinguistic studies of language production (Levelt 1989), it remains a grammar, that is, an account of linguistic phenomena. FDG is thus a model of language, of 'encoded intentions and conceptualizations', not a model of the language user (see Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008: 2). Instead, the grammar must be seen as mimicking the process of language production by modelling 'the sequence of steps that the analyst must take in understanding and laying bare the nature of a particular phenomenon' (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008: 2).

1.6. Summary

This chapter has provided a general characterization of the theory of FDG by describing the underlying aims and principles of the theory and by indicating its position in the spectrum of functional approaches. The main points can be summarized as follows:

- FDG is a functional theory in that it regards the form of a language as being shaped by its use. As such, FDG does not look at linguistic utterances in isolation, but also takes into consideration the cognitive, discourse, and interactional aspects of such utterances.
- FDG is at the same time form-oriented in that its aim is to capture all and only the formal properties of linguistic units, taking into consideration,

however, the communicative intentions with which these units were produced and the context in which they were uttered. This means that FDG only includes in its grammar those cognitive, discourse, and interactional aspects that are systematically reflected in the form (morphosyntax or phonology) of a language.

- Despite the fact that FDG is speaker-oriented and modular, it is not intended as a model of language production. Instead, FDG is first and foremost an attempt to describe and explain linguistic facts in a way compatible with what is known about language processing.
- It is believed that only through this specific combination of features and assumptions will it be possible to offer a unified and comprehensive account of the use, meaning, and form of all linguistic utterances.

Exercises

1. One prescriptive rule for English is that double negations are not allowed. Now consider the examples in (ia) (from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*) and (ib) (from Spanish):

- (i) a. Ther *nas no man nowher so vertuous. *was not
He was the beste beggere in the hous.
(Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue 251–252)
- b. No sé nunca nada de nada.
not know never nothing about nothing
'I never know anything (about anything).'

How many negations do these examples contain? What does this tell you about the nature of prescriptive rules?

Now compare the following two examples:

- (ii) I don't use bloody carbolic soap, I, don't never use nothing like that.
(BYU-BNC, spoken, conversation)

Find similar examples from a corpus (for instance the BNC or COCA) and/or the Internet and see if you can find patterns in the use of these double/triple negations (who uses them, under which circumstances, what is their function).

If such patterns exist, what does that mean for the validity of this prescriptive rule?

2. Using the list of functions of language in Section 1.3.1, try and identify the main function(s) of the examples in (i). Is it always easy to determine the (possible) function(s) of an utterance? Are there any (major) functions that you feel should be added to the list?

- (i) a. My Christmas wish list: pony, Resident Evil 4, no socks!!!
- b. Brrr, bit nippy today.
- c. Joe Bloggs 1941–2012 | No pain, no grief, no anxious fear | can reach our loved one sleeping here.
- d. Ouch!
- e. Why is the number six so scared? Because seven eight nine!
- f. Big deal. | Whatever. | Yeah, right.

3.* As pointed out in Section 1.3.1, linguistic elements may not always be easy to categorize, for instance in terms of syntactic category (verb, noun, adjective, preposition, etc.).

Consider the examples in (i) and (ii):

- (i) a. The dog was tired.
- b. The dog was very tired.
- c. the tired dog
- (ii) a. The dog was asleep.
- b. *The dog was very asleep.
- c. *the asleep dog

- a. What kind of words are *tired* and *asleep* (verb, noun, adjective, etc.). Are both equally good examples of the category they belong to? Why (not)?
- b. Look up the origin of the word *asleep*. What form did it have in Old English? Does this help us to explain the syntactic behaviour illustrated in (ii)?

Changes in the syntactic category of a word also take place in Present-day English, as illustrated in example (iii):

- (iii) a. Many companies attempted to justify the dismissals by saying employees were *absent*. (COCA, written, newspaper)
- b. But it is still clear that *absent* this program, thousands of Georgia students would still be attending public schools their parents felt—for whatever reason—were not serving their children’s needs. (COCA, written, newspaper)
- c. *In the absence of* better public transportation, some teens would like to skateboard from place to place . . . (COCA, written, newspaper)